

Occupational Health TODAY

GREATER HAZLETON
HEALTH ALLIANCE

Hazleton-Saint Joseph Medical Center

SPRING 1999

Hazleton General Hospital

New MRI Center to house Occupational Health Services



Construction on Occupational Health Services' new home is nearing completion.

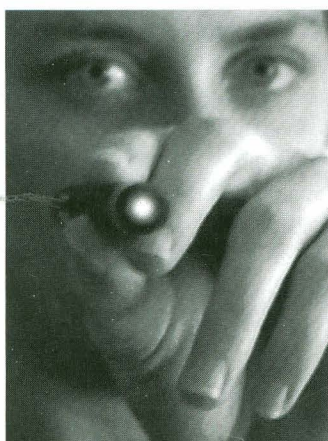
Laser Pointers: A New Concern

During the past year, our Occupational Health clinic has received several calls from companies regarding laser pointers. Apparently, more employees are carrying laser pointers to work, especially on their key chains. Locally, there were several incidents where one employee's eyes came in contact with a laser pointer operated by another employee. In all cases, the laser pointers were being used for non work-related reasons. At least one employee had to be treated by an eye specialist.

As you may know, laser pointers have become increasingly popular. They are low cost, operate on AAA batteries, and easy to obtain. Their intended use is by educators in a classroom setting or presentations at meetings and conventions. But now they are being used to annoy, distract, or even intimidate others. Several local governments across the United States have either banned their sale to minors or banned them altogether.

Of major concern is whether laser pointers can

damage the eye. According to Martin A. Mainster, M.D., Ph.D., subject expert for the American Academy of Ophthalmology, it's theoretically possible that a prolonged exposure of 10 seconds or more could damage the retina, the light-sensitive tissue that lines the inside of the eye and sends visual information to the brain. Dr. Mainster also states, "It's highly unlikely that an accidental laser pointer exposure could damage the retina. Laser pointers are dazzling. Inadvertent exposures are quickly terminated in less than a quarter of a second by the body's natural reaction to blink or look away from brilliant light.



Momentary exposure to a properly labeled laser pointer should be safe, but staring at a laser pointer is unwise and may be harmful. Unfortunately, children can do foolish things."

Besides, the effect that a stray laser point beam may have on someone's eyes, there is also a concern at the workplace that it could affect perception during vision-

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Workers are making finishing touches and a spring opening is planned for the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance's new center, which will be home for Occupational Health Services and Hazleton MRI Center.

Motorists traveling along the Airport Beltway near the Laurel Mall have been able to watch the building take shape and may have seen the new MRI magnets being delivered by crane recently.

We are looking forward to the move into our new offices where you will find the same friendly faces you've come to know but in a much more modern environment. And there will be plenty of parking as an added bonus.

We will continue offering work-related medical services including treatment of injuries and illnesses, pre-placement and annual physical examinations, drug and alcohol testing, preventive services and much more.

The building will also house two of the most modern diagnostic testing tools available today. Our Magnetic Resonance Imaging units are both non-claustrophobic, and one is the new open bore architecture.

All businesses will be sent information on the opening date.

*Inside
Special issue
Keeping
your employees
healthy*



Letter from the President

I'm pleased to have this opportunity to advise you, as a vital Greater Hazleton Area employer, of the new services and initiatives of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance.

In December, we dedicated the area's first inpatient rehabilitation center. The 16-bed facility, named after the retired orthopaedic surgeon Robert L. Gunderson, M.D., features an interdisciplinary professional team who deliver intensive inpatient rehabilitation services to those who have experienced an injury or illness, such as a stroke, closed head injury, multiple trauma, hip fractures and replacements, amputations, polyarthritis, degenerative and progressive neurological disorders, Guillian-Barre, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, or cancer. The Center also houses a one-bed transitional apartment that each patient can stay in prior to discharge. The staff is

headed by Dr. Terrence Duffy, an area rehabilitation specialist. RehabCare Group is providing the management for the center.

In the upcoming weeks we will see the completion of the Center which will house the Hazleton MRI Center, Inc. and the GHHA Occupational Health Services. Its location will be on the Airport Beltway. The Hazleton MRI Center, a not-for-profit corporation affiliated with GHHA, owns the facility that will offer two MRI suites. The GHHA Occupational Health Services will have an expanded clinical area to meet their growing client base. We're excited to bring state of the art services to Hazleton and its surrounding communities. Our goal is to continue increasing the quality of services so health care is even more convenient and close to home for our patients.

Bernard C. Rudegeair

Women Together Program



The Greater Hazleton Health Alliance Women Together Program is entering its third year of existence. The Women Together Program offers various events for the Greater Hazleton Area. The program boosts the concept of "women building a better community."

A wide variety of upcoming events are being organized for the 1999 year. Remember to mark your calendar for the Third Annual Women Together All Day Conference on Saturday, Oct. 2.

For information on any Women Together Events, call the Alliance at 1-888-530-7888.



SMOKING PROGRAM

The "Quit Smart" Smoking Cessation Program was developed by Dr. Robert Shipley, the founding director of the Duke Medical Center Stop Smoking Clinic.

The "Quit Smart" method is based on 20 years of research and practice and is a simple but effective stop smoking system. The treatment components include:

1. Nicotine Fading,
2. Nicotine Replacement Therapy (per physician recommendation),
3. Health professional counseling and support,
4. Withdrawal symptom management,
5. Relapse prevention/recovery strategies,
6. Weight control strategies.

The "Quit Smart" treatment program is delivered in three phases-preparation, quitting, and maintenance-and involves three to four 90-minute group sessions.

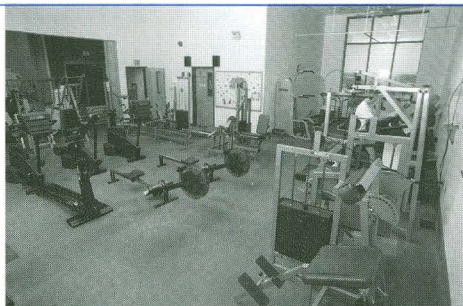
The "Quit Smart" program has been utilized by the following companies: General Electric, Glaxo Wellcome Pharmaceuticals, NASA, Owens Corning, and the U.S. Air Force Academy.

The "Quit Smart" program can be offered to your company. For more information, call Tina Fellin, R.N., at St. Joseph's Rehabilitation and Fitness Center at 459-3467.

St. Joe's Fitness Center

Our Fitness Center offers you the opportunity to exercise any day of the week, with recently expanded hours.

The Center has both cardiovascular conditioning and strength training machines, along with aerobics. Machines include treadmills, Concept II rowers, Stairmasters, an EFX, stationary bikes, a cross country skier, and Cybex weight machines. Lockers and showers are also available.



Corporate rates are available if five or more of your employees join the Center. For more information, call Dennis, Jeannette, or Corrine at 459-3467.

"Winning by Losing" WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

"Winning by Losing" is a group weight management program available to companies as well as the community at large. It incorporates behavior modification, the role of diet in disease prevention, development of a healthy eating plan, and an emphasis on "making all foods fit" into an easily understandable and practical plan.

The above services are provided by JoAnne Beaver, R.D. Call 636-5323 for more information.

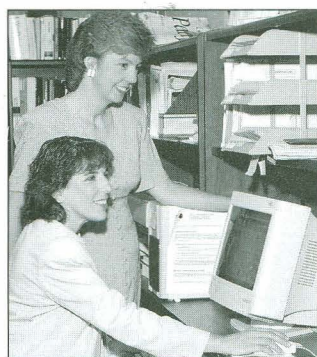
Outpatient Nutrition Counseling

A registered dietitian can meet with you on an individual basis to provide counseling and education on the following topics: hypertension (high blood pressure), renal (kidney) disease, diabetes, weight loss (including behavior modification), hyperlipidemia (high triglycerides and cholesterol), gestational diabetes, pre-natal nutrition, cancer, and other nutritional intervention as deemed necessary by a physician. Call 636-5323 for more information.

Hazleton General Hospital (HGH) Health InfoLine

Since 1993, the HGH Medical Library has been offering a free telephone service to the community. This service enables anyone to call the medical library and request medical information in non-technical language.

The medical library has a large collection of books written for patients and consumers addressing a wide range of topics including diseases, conditions, health promotion and health care utilization. Additional resources include consumer health journals, newsletters, pamphlets, and toll free health resource numbers. Spanish language



Librarian Elaine Curry and Paula Gutsie research medical information.

materials are also being added to the collection. The library also has a computer database program Health Reference Center, which provides access to full text articles, pamphlets, and reference books in non-technical language.

Referrals to appropriate hospital departments and local, state, and national agencies are included in the service. Anyone interested in utilizing this service can call the HGH medical library at 450-4257.

SENIOR CHOICE

The Senior Choice Program is designed for the many seniors in our area. This program is offered to anyone 62 years old and older. There is no membership fee. Over 600 of the seniors in our area are already taking advantage of this great program.

Some of the benefits they receive are educational breakfasts and lunches. At these functions, they are able to meet the physicians in our area that they may not already know, and have many of their medical questions answered. Other benefits they receive are cholesterol and blood sugar screening, pharmacy profile, blood pressure screening, hearing screenings, newsletter, bus trips, and an annual Christmas party. This program also offers help with choosing a health insurance plan by explaining the benefits and letting them know about their responsibility for the plan they choose. This enables them to make an informed decision about their health insurance to best suit their medical needs. It allows them the opportunity to receive information on the benefits they are, or are not, entitled to.

If you have any family members or friends who may benefit from Senior Choice, why not have them take advantage of the program. If you would like further information, please contact Joan Warner at 454-4752.



Joan Warner

critical job tasks (such as working around moving machinery). Laser pointers may result in flashblindness, glare, or afterimages.

As the number of incidents in the U.S. has increased, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also issued a warning on laser pointers on Dec. 18, 1997. The warning (listed below) was geared more toward the misuse by children, but is applicable to the general population.

FDA Warning on Laser Pointers

- The FDA is warning parents and school officials about the possibility of eye damage to children from hand-held laser pointers.

- These products are generally safe when used as intended by teachers and lecturers to highlight areas on a chart or screen. However, recent price reductions have led to wider marketing, and the FDA is concerned about the promotion and use of these products as children's toys.

- The light energy that laser pointers can aim into the eye can be more damaging than staring directly into the sun. Federal law requires a warning on the product label about the potential hazard to the eyes.

Diabetes Education Services

Education for self-managing diabetics is vital to a full and happy life. Our program of services offers a way to help with managing your diabetes.

The Outpatient Diabetes Self-Management Program is based upon your own, individual needs. This can be accomplished through individual counseling with a Diabetic Educator on an ongoing basis. Or, our group program offers education classes at various times throughout the year.

We also offer monthly Support Group meetings. They are informal and give you the opportunity to share your experiences with other diabetics. Guest speakers provide discussion on a variety of topics related to your diabetes care. For more information, contact Susan Generose, Diabetes Coordinator at 459-2227.



Susan Generose

Laser Pointers from page 1

- "These laser pointers are not toys. Parents should treat them with the appropriate care. They are useful tools for adults that should be used by children only with adequate supervision." (FDA Lead Deputy Commissioner Michael A. Friedman, MD.)

- The FDA's warning is prompted by two anecdotal reports it has received of eye injury from laser pointers—one from a parent, the other from an ophthalmologist.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology also suggests that consumers should only purchase FDA-approved laser pointers with required warning labels. This is because some unregulated, more powerful and more hazardous laser pointers can be obtained through the Internet from other countries.

The reference used for this article was "Safety Recommendations of Laser Pointers", by R. James Rockwell, Jr., William J. Ertle, and C. Eugene Moss. You can access the entire report at: www.rli.com/pointer. "Laser Pointers - Out of the Boardroom and Into the Streets", the American Academy of Ophthalmology. You can access the Academy at: www.eyenet.org.

GREATER HAZLETON HEALTH ALLIANCE

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Welcome

We want to welcome and introduce the newest members of our active medical staff at Hazleton-Saint Joseph Medical Center and Hazleton General Hospital. These doctors have joined us since July 1. They, along with the other members of our Medical Staff, enable you to obtain quality health care, *close to home!*



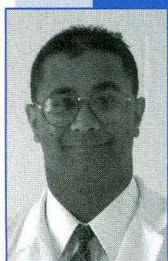
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Information contained in this publication is not intended to take the place of medical advice from physicians or other health professionals.

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